

## **AMHERST COUNCIL ON AGING MINUTES**

### **July 10, 2008**

**Members and Members-Elect Present:** Daniel Clapp, Joan Golowich, Joel Gordon, Doris Holden, Rosemary Kofler, Kathy Koplow, Barbara Sutherland, Juana Trujillo, David Yaukey

**Absent:** none

**Select Board Liaison, Gerry Weiss:** absent

**Staff Present:** Nancy Pagano (Director/Program Director), Maura Plante (Assistant Director/Services), Giovanna Mix (Administrative Assistant for Programs)

**Guests:** Marge Babb

#### **Welcome:**

Barbara Sutherland, Chair, called the Council on Aging meeting to order at 9:07 AM.

Nancy announced that Kathy and Juana, new prospective COA members, will be interviewed by the Town Manager tomorrow. She is confident they will be approved. Individual COA members introduced themselves.

Barbara read "Section 4.3 General Guidelines" to remind us that "No one may speak at a committee meeting without permission of the chair".

#### **Minutes of Previous Meeting:**

The minutes of the June 12, 2008, meeting were approved and accepted.

#### **Friends of Amherst Senior Center Treasurer's Report:**

**Doris** provided a handout showing a \$100.00 donation, leaving a balance of \$4,748.10 in the checking account and \$550.00 in the Stay Put account. There is \$81,991.22 in the investment account. The report was approved and accepted.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### **Governor Patrick's Visit:**

**Nancy** announced that Governor Patrick will meet with his Cabinet in our building on July 17th at 2:00 PM. This is the first of four such meetings being held across the state. The meeting will be open to the public.

#### **Meals on Wheels costs:**

**Maura** reported. The UMass MOW program delivers a hot supper meal plus a bag lunch for the next day to Amherst (only) residents age 60 and above who are medically or cognitively unable to prepare their own meals. The cost is \$4.10/day or \$20.50/week. About 30 people participate. There is a North and a South route. It is a self-supporting program. UMass charges the Senior Center \$3.50/meal. We pay the drivers \$0.50 for each meal they deliver. The rising cost of gas is a concern for retaining drivers. It would be better to reimburse drivers on a per mile basis rather than a per meal basis. Maura and John Foster sent a letter to all volunteer drivers asking them to calculate the miles they drive so that we can determine how much to raise the cost of the meals in order to cover the reimbursement. Maura sent a letter to MOW recipients explaining the situation. Several elders responded and fully understand the need to raise the cost of the meals.

#### **HVES Home Delivered Meal Mileage Reimbursement:**

**Nancy** clarified the difference between UMass MOW supper program and the lunchtime "Home Delivered Meals" program funded by HVES and administered by the Senior Center. Meal delivery programs are vital because they allow elders to remain independent and in their own homes. The "Care Advisor" (case manager at HVES) determines who is eligible to get meal deliveries. The Care Advisor visits the elder, assesses the home situation and all of the needs, and then notifies Ferne, our Nutrition Site Director, of the specific meal delivery directive for that individual. (Some people get diabetic meals, supper bag meals and even frozen meals for the weekend.) The case managers have a huge caseload and are challenged to meet all of the elders in their homes on a very regular basis. Consequently, some seniors may continue to receive meals at home even though their needs

have changed from initial enrollment. Our count has gone up about 10% each year. Up until the end of June '08 we have offered drivers \$0.35/mile (the same amount Town employees get.) Three of our drivers decline the stipend. The Town recently increased mileage reimbursement from \$0.35/mile to \$0.50/mile for Town employees; therefore our drivers will also get \$0.50/mile. HVES pays us \$0.91/meal to run our program. The Federal government has not increased funding to elderly nutrition programs for 20 years. Nancy is currently writing the FY09 nutrition grant application to HVES and asking for more monetary support for the meal delivery program expenses. Nancy urged COA members to be thinking about the pros and cons of alternative ways of reducing costs as they are proposed by HVES and others. One idea being considered is to deliver frozen meals at times, thereby delivering less frequently. One of the problems with only one or two deliveries per week is the lack of ability to check on the well-being of the elder. It is not uncommon to find an elder in need of medical attention or even deceased. In addition, sometimes the driver needs to open up the meal and set up utensils, etc. for the elder. A frozen meal would require the infirmed elder to unwrap the meal and heat it unassisted. Some people would just not be able to manage this and would therefore not be able eat. HVES is considering various alternatives to cope with the rising fuel costs in the face of level funding. COA members can write letters and advocate for increased funding. Nancy will keep us informed about HVES and its budget and policy decisions. Eligibility of both Amherst Senior Center meal programs is based on 'need' not on income. The HVES lunch meal is free but a donation is requested. The UMass MOW meals program is designed to be self-supporting--the recipient pays a daily fee to participate. The HVES congregate and home delivered meals programs are paid for by a combination of State and Federal funds and only unmonitored voluntary contributions are asked.

**David** wondered if we should donate money or fund raise for the lunch meals program, since "meals on wheels" is such a meaningful term to the public and a highly visible program in the community. Nancy said that so far the HVES Home Delivered Meal program is in the black because of the volunteerism in Amherst. It is probable that a lack of adequate funding from the Federal and State governments may necessitate fundraising and delivery policy changes.

## **CONTINUING BUSINESS**

### **Meeting with Susan Whitbourne:**

Rosemary, Nancy and Susan met on July 9 to discuss how to proceed in producing a publication in honor of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary since we will not be doing the 'insert' in the Gazette. We decided to create a "special edition" of the Senior Spirit that will be solely a tribute to the Senior Center. (It will not contain any of the regular Senior Spirit news.) It will include the origin of the center, the history, stories and old photographs and articles about our current services and programs. The Friends will solicit ads to help pay for the publication. Susan has written a draft letter to local businesses asking for ads and contributions. In addition, an article will appear in the August *Senior Spirit* inviting seniors to contribute and have their names listed as donors in the publication.

Nancy will send an email to other COAs in the state asking if they have ever done a special publication such as this, in order to get ideas. She asked COA members to let her know if they would like to contribute or if they have suggestions for what they would like included. The "special edition" should be sent out before the dinner on October 19. It will be sent to everyone on the *Senior Spirit* mailing list and we will get 500 extra copies for further distribution in Town. Nancy will look into the cost of doing it in color.

## **STAFF REPORTS**

**Nancy** stated that the staff is buried in reports at the moment. There is a detailed statistic report for the Massachusetts Department of Elder Affairs due in August as well as the annual Town Report. Grant applications to Highland Valley for the lunch program, counseling and others are due. HVES has made the process for filling out grants more challenging this year by having the entire grant typed and emailed in one sitting with no opportunity to do it piece-meal.

## **SUB-COMMITTEE UPDATE**

**40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Sub-Committee:**

**Rosemary** reported. Plans for the 40<sup>th</sup> celebration dinner are progressing nicely. Members will meet again on July 11 to discuss entertainment and dinner details. COA members are invited to help serve the sit-down dinner. Most of the members offered to help serve. Nancy and Joel are working on a slide show. There will be considerable work at the last minute with decorations and table setting. Juana offered to help with the decorations.

**Ad Hoc Survey Committee:**

**David** reported on the first 'expanded' meeting with two new members. Sondra Lapollo from the Chicopee COA and Jan Dizard from the Dept. of Sociology at Amherst College contributed considerably. They had a free-flowing discussion and re-visited all prior tentative decisions. They will meet again on July 31 and try to come to some decisions about how to proceed. All members have copies of the questionnaire from the Chicopee survey.

**Nancy** clarified the Open Meeting law. If a committee does not have a quorum of COA members, which is 5, there is no need to worry about the Open Meeting law for small sub-committees. These committees present recommendations to the COA and the COA makes the final decisions. The committee meeting does not therefore need to be publicly posted. Procedural questions can be shared amongst members by e-mail but no action can be taken by e-mail.

**Highland Valley Elder Services:**

HVES will not meet again until September.

**Dan** reported about the Fourth of July parade. He said it was fun and went very well. The COA made a good presentation to the community, which was well received. It was a good introduction to our 40<sup>th</sup> year. Dan commended Nancy for planning and arranging our participation. The banner was very nicely done.

The COA meeting adjourned at 10:15 AM.

**The next meeting of the COA will be held on September 4, 2008 at 9:00 AM.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Rosemary Kofler, Secretary

The approved minutes of the June 12, 2008 meeting were delivered to the Selectboard office to be filed.